WESTMINSTER COURT OF SEWERS.

On Friday, the 28th of November, a Court was held. The cash at the bankers was 17,058*l.* 7*s.* 1*d.* An application from the Holborn and Finsbury Commission to join in the expense of a new sewer down Shire-lane, Temple-bar, was declined, on the ground that large improvements were in contemplation in the locality, and that it was unnecessary to use the city outlet, when there was one in the Westminster commission quite contiguous.

Mr. Dowley brought up his report as to "the materials, &c., required for the new establishment of labourers and bricklayers, by whom all works under 50*l.* and the cleansing of sewers and gullies, are to be performed." Mr. Leslie moved that the report be printed, and taken into consideration at the next Court. Mr. Marriot having seconded the same, Mr. Donaldson objected to printing the report; he was satisfied there must be different yards to deposit the materials; there must be yard foremen to book the materials as they came in and went out. Although he felt convinced great confusion would arise from the change, still he thought that it should have a fair trial. The report should originate with the honourable mover, to prevent him from hereafter saying the plan had failed from the want of foresight. He ought to have the money, whether it were 1,000*l.* or 2,000*l.*, but the Court must be assured that he approved of the plan.

Mr. Baylis, Mr. Hawkes, and Mr. F. Grace concurred in throwing cold water on the plan, and fixing the responsibility of carrying it out, on the proposer. They objected to print the report. Mr. Le Breton thought this course unfair, and Mr. Comberlege expressed his determination to take his share of the responsibility attaching to the general scheme he had helped to carry.

Mr. Allason thought the subject one of the most important that had ever been before the Court. The plan might succeed, or it might fail. He thought the honourable mover and seconder ought to be held fast as to responsibility. The Court, no doubt, would be inclined to give them all the aid in its power. He would confess that he was unfavourable to it, but at the same time he would render every assistance to carry it out. The Court must look to Mr. Leslie that the way in which he proposed to carry out his plan was a reasonable, proper, and judicious one. Mr. Dowley's mind was not Mr. Leslie's mind, and, therefore, the honourable commissioner, and not the surveyor, ought to be held responsible.

Mr. Leslie felt grateful to the gentlemen who had proferred kind assistance in carrying out his plan; but with all their kind expressions, they had not had the ingenuity to conceal their deadly hatred to it. It was the final blow to the forty years' monopoly of the contractors in that Court, and it was to be expected that much vexation on that account would exhibit itself. The real state of matters would shew that he (Mr. Leslie) did not come down to the Court with crude and ill-digested plans, but plans that could be carried out. The friendly feeling towards the plan could not be better evinced than, by looking at what the Court had been doing since the plan had been twice approved by the Court. Why they had dismissed the two surveyors, and declared that there should be no assistant surveyors at all, and this immediately after the Court had twice wisely resolved to do itself, without contractors, all works under 50*l.*, and the entire cleansing of the sewers.

Mr. John Gunter thought the Court was bound to assist Mr. Leslie, and not to allow any parties to frustrate that which the Court had promised to do, by ordering and sanctioning his proposition.

The Chairman said, the simple question was, as to printing an imperfect document. The whole figures being in pencil, it was clear to him that it had been hastily prepared by their officer. It was then resolved to refer the report back to Mr. Dowley, and that he should submit it to the mover and seconder of the plan.

A long discussion then ensued as to the power of the Court to build sewers where none had before existed; Mr. Le Breton contending that the Court had the power, and Mr. Marriot declaring that the most minute trifling surface drain, when it passed the property of favoured commissioners, was a sufficient excuse to put the district to the expense of building a new sewer; and he instanced a recent expenditure in Brompton-road as a proof of what he said. There was no clear principle laid down, and consequently no security to property.

Mr Donaldson loudly complained of Mr. Marriot's statement. "We are all involved (said the honourable commissioner) in his attack; and I, for one, defy him to prove his assertions." Mr. Marriot said he was sorry if he had gone too far, for he intended to cast no individual reflections, but it was for the honour of the Court and its credit with the public, that there should be some regular plan laid down, and then the public would know what could be done and what could not, at the public expense. The chairman, without disputing his friend Mr. Le Breton's law, stated, that it would be unjust to call upon the public to pay for the advantage which was solely to private property. The matter then dropped.

*** We cannot understand honourable commissioners, who would throw upon the mover of a resolution passed by the Court, the responsibility for its success or otherwise. A motion when carried, becomes the resolution of the body, and with that body, not with any individual, rests the responsibility.

On Wednesday last, the committee appointed to prepare a reply to Mr. Leslie's pamphlet, in compliance with Sir James Graham's letter, brought up their report to a special Court. It was adopted, and is by this time in the Secretary of State's office. Of this, hereafter.

THE MORAL AND INDUSTRIAL TRAINING SCHOOLS AT SWINTON.

These schools, which are now nearly completed, are sufficiently important from their object, and their extensive scale to require some notice. They have been erected at Swinton, near Manchester, for the education of the pauper children of the parish, are fitted up with every convenience requisite for teaching various trades and occupations, and are no doubt well calculated to be the means of conferring important and solid benefits upon the poor of Manchester. Extensive as the building is, its size is not at first apparent. The general plan forms a quadrangle, covering, independent of the garden, four acres of ground, the principal front being 480 feet in length. The arrangements comprise, school and class-rooms for boys, girls, and infants, work-rooms, sick and fever wards, a dining-room, which serves also for a chapel, domestic offices, a surgery, lavatories, and masters' rooms. The design was by Messrs. Tattersall and Dickson, the superintendence and completion of the building being mainly due to the latter. It is in the Elizabethan style, the materials being red brick with stone dressings. Approached from the Manchester road, the main front has a more imposing effect than we recollect to have seen elsewhere, a modern example of, in the same style of architecture. The breaks and gables, and the centre and its balustraded steps, are composed with much skill and effect in the result. In the centre rise the two turrets. There is much stone work about the entrance, and the details partake largely of the Italian style; indeed, whatever merits there may be in the building, there is nothing which could not have been quite as well treated in a purer style of architecture than that employed. In the interior, there is little in the way of decoration to call for notice; the board-room is, however, a good apartment, with some tolerable furniture. The great merit of the building consists in the manner in which every part is adapted to the object of instruction in the various trades. The lavatories are fitted up with numerous basins, in rows, cut out of blocks of stone, and with large baths for complete immersion. The total cost is understood to be about 40,000*l.* The arrangements for ventilation cost 5000*l.* (!) and were under the superintendence of Dr. Reid. Though this amount may include the heating, it appears enormous. Considering that Dr. Reid's plans do not appear to have yet met with any great success, we are surprised that they should have been adopted. Ventilation is undoubtedly a matter of paramount importance, and by no individuals is held to be more so than by architects. If every architect of a public building had had some thousands allotted to *him*, solely for ventilation, and experiments in reference to it, the successful ventilation of large buildings would not be, as it still is, a desideratum. However important ventilation may be, and we are prepared to argue the great importance of it, it is not to be sought to the detriment of other objects; the convenient arrangement of a building should not be sacrificed, much less the stability, and the beautiful is quite compatible with it. In the building here noticed, the turrets perform the office of ventilating shafts; the air is warmed by hot-water pipes of large bore, and is passed through the building by enormous flues, built out into the rooms in the most unsightly positions; some of them, we may venture to say, are not less than three feet square. In the principal school-rooms, the air is admitted by numerous holes drilled in the floor, and passed out by valved apertures in the ceiling, which can be regulated. The dormitory is over the school-room; but as the two apartments could never be in use at the same moment, the ventilation of the upper room is provided for, whilst its occupants would not breathe vitiated air.

In a communication, lately received from a valued friend, one of the board of guardians, he says—"The apparatus has been tried as far as it is completed, and found to work well;" further he says, that he is "anxious to do justice to a man who has been attacked by willing senators, disappointed patentees, parasites of Mr. Barry, and a score of others, who, from various motives, have been induced to injure the reputation of one who, I honestly believe, to be practical in his views, and honest in his intentions." In reference to this we may say, that no fair trial can take place till the building has been used for the intended purposes in the full extent, which it cannot have been hitherto; that Dr. Reid's plans have been objected to by men of every description and party, who have had lamentable experience of their inefficiency. We are not aware of any instance of their success. They are enormously expensive, and injurious to the building and its objects, and should no longer be persisted in. Every architect is able to receive valuable information from men of science, eminent in their own walk, and is anxious to seek it, but it is on him that the arrangement of every part should depend, and no successful issue can be arrived at by any other course. If ventilation, as now managed, be actually destructive of the health, which it is expected to benefit, it would be positively better to leave it quite unattended to; at least, we venture to say that a skilful architect, if unfettered, would produce a better result, and at the same time consistent with any other end which, in late attempts at ventilation, is deemed an after consideration. The ventilation must be adapted to the building, not the building to the ventilation. We shall always be anxious to meet with any valuable suggestions from Dr. Reid, or from any other individual, and should an instance of success in any plan be shewn to us, shall gladly record an opinion in its favour. But, at present, the evidence as to Dr. Reid's system is strikingly unfavourable.

STONE STAIRCASES, UNDER THE BUILDINGS ACT.

Sir,—I lately commenced erecting a dwelling-house, which, I believe, comes in the first class of buildings. In ignorance of the provisions of the New Buildings Act, I commenced a stone staircase, but did not provide for supporting the stone landings by fire-proof constructions in the passage, &c.; I am now told I must do so; and having referred, when too late, to the Act, this certainly appears to be the intention thereof. If so, I shall be compelled to put up a wooden staircase the same as my passage, &c., and may never have an opportunity of bringing in my stone staircase, as it is of peculiar construction. Perhaps you may be able to suggest some way in which I can use my stone steps with the landings I have fixed. To me it appears unaccountable, that all the staircase, passage, &c., may be of wood, but not a part. Perhaps you can throw some light on the subject, and oblige

Your constant reader,

A Mason.

*** The wording of the Act in this respect is precise, and seems to leave no discretionary power. The regulation is certainly abnormous. We should be inclined to send the question to the referees.

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